Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A component-holding-tape connecting apparatus for connecting ~~trailing and leading end portions of respective~~ two component holding tapes through a ~~metallic~~ connecting member having a plurality of caulking claws, by caulking ~~the trailing and leading~~ end portions of the respective two component holding tapes and the ~~metallic~~ connecting member in a caulking position, with the ~~metallic~~ connecting member being held in close contact with the ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions, and with each of the ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions being pierced by at least one of the plurality of caulking claws of the ~~metallic~~ connecting member, said component-holding-tape connecting apparatus comprising:

a supplying device holding a plurality of ~~metallic~~ connecting members each provided by the ~~metallic~~ connecting member, and supplying the plurality of ~~metallic~~ connecting members one by one to ~~a~~ said caulking position;

a holding device ~~positioning and~~ holding, in said caulking position, the ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions of the respective two component holding tapes and the ~~metallic~~ connecting member which is supplied by said supplying device; and

a caulking device caulking the end portions of the respective two component holding tapes and the connecting member which are held by said holding device, by causing ~~the~~ at least one of the plurality of caulking claws of the ~~metallic~~ connecting member ~~held by said holding device,~~ to pierce through each of the ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions of the respective two component holding tapes, and ~~caulking~~ deforming the at least one of the plurality of caulking claws of the ~~metallic~~ connecting member.

2. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein said supplying device includes a rotary body positioning the plurality of ~~metallic~~ connecting members one by one in a predetermined position, ~~by being rotated about a rotary axis thereof by a predetermined angle~~

and wherein said rotary body is rotated about a rotary axis thereof by a predetermined angle when operated to position each one of the plurality of connecting members in said predetermined position.

3. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 2,

wherein said caulking device is operated by operation of an operating lever, to caulk the end portions of the respective two component holding tapes and the connecting member which are held by said holding device,

said component-holding-tape connecting apparatus further comprising a motion converting device converting a pivot motion of said operating lever into a rotary motion of said rotary body.

4. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 2 ~~or 3~~, wherein said rotary body has a plurality of ~~metallic connecting member~~ connecting-member holding portions in an outer circumferential surface thereof, and holds the ~~metallic~~ connecting members in the respective ~~metallic connecting member~~ connecting-member holding portions.

5. (Original) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising a rotary-body holding portion rotatably and detachably holding said rotary body.

6. (Original) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 5,

wherein each of at least one of said rotary body and said rotary-body holding portion has a magnet,

and wherein said rotary body is attracted by said rotary-body holding portion owing to a magnetic force of said magnet, so as to be held by said rotary-body holding portion.

7. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 6,

wherein said rotary body and said rotary-body holding portion have respective magnets each provided by said magnet,

~~and~~ wherein one of the magnets ~~provided in one of the rotary body and the rotary-body holding portion are~~ includes a plurality of magnet members disposed to be spaced apart from each other by an angular pitch equal to ~~an angle of one rotational motion of the rotary body, for thereby positioning the rotary body in an angular position in which each of the magnets provided in the one of the rotary body and the rotary-body holding portion is just opposed to the magnet provided in the other of the rotary body and the rotary-body holding portion~~ said predetermined angle,

and wherein each of said plurality of magnet members is brought into a position opposed to a magnet member of the other of said magnets, when said rotary body is

positioned in an angular position which causes a corresponding one of the plurality of connecting members to be positioned in said predetermined position.

8. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 2 ~~or 3~~,

~~wherein the plurality of metallic connecting members are equally spaced apart from each other and are held by a holding member which has an elongated shape and which has engaged portions equally spaced apart from each other in a longitudinal direction of said holding member,~~

~~and~~ wherein said rotary body of said supplying device is operated to hold an elongated-shaped holding member which has engaged portions equally spaced apart from each other in a longitudinal direction thereof and which holds the plurality of connecting members which are equally spaced apart from each other,

and wherein said rotary body has, in an outer circumferential surface, engaging portions which are equi-angularly spaced apart from each other and which are to be held in engagement with the respective engaged portions.

9. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 8,

~~wherein the holding member is formed integrally with the metallic connecting members to which the holding member is partially connected, through an operation in which a metal strip is punched,~~

~~said component holding tape connecting apparatus~~ further comprising a cutting-off device cutting each of the ~~metallic~~ connecting members off from the holding member while said each of the ~~metallic~~ connecting members is being positioned in said

predetermined position.

10. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 9, ~~further comprising~~ wherein said supplying device includes, in addition to said rotary body, a moving device holding the ~~metallic~~ connecting member cut off by said cutting-off device and moving the ~~metallic~~ connecting member to said caulking position ~~, said moving device cooperating with said rotary body to constitute said supplying device~~.

11. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 10,

wherein said moving device includes a second rotary body which is other than said rotary body as a first rotary body,

and wherein said second rotary body has a plurality of ~~metallic connecting member~~ connecting-member holding portions to hold the connecting members, and is rotatable about a second rotary axis thereof which is other than said rotary axis as a first rotary axis.

12. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 11,

wherein said plurality of ~~metallic connecting member~~ connecting-member holding portions of said second rotary body have respective magnets,

and wherein said second rotary body ~~and hold the~~ holds metallic connecting members as the connecting members which are attracted by said plurality of connecting-member holding portions owing to a magnetic force of each of said magnets.

13. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to claim 11 ~~or 12~~, wherein said cutting-off device has cutting blades each of which is provided in a corresponding one of said plurality of ~~metallic connecting member~~ connecting-member holding portions of said second rotary body.

14. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to ~~any of claims 11-13~~ claim 11, wherein each of said plurality of ~~metallic connecting member~~ connecting-member holding portions of said second rotary body constitutes a caulking tool for ~~caulking~~ deforming the at least one of the plurality of caulking claws.

15. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to ~~any of claims 11-14~~ claim 11,

wherein said caulking device is operated by operation of an operating lever,

said component-holding-tape connecting apparatus further comprising a ~~second~~ motion converting device converting a pivot motion of said operating lever into a rotary motion of said second rotary body.

16. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to ~~any of claims 8-15~~ claim 9,

wherein said caulking device is operated by operation of an operating lever,

said component-holding-tape connecting apparatus further comprising a first guide portion that is to guide ~~a portion of~~ the holding member ~~from which the plurality of metallic connecting members are not yet separated,~~ toward ~~said rotary body~~ said predetermined position in which each of the connecting members is to be cut off from the

holding member,

wherein said first guide portion constitutes a second operating lever which cooperates with said operating lever as a first operating lever to operate said caulking device.

17. (Currently Amended) The component-holding-tape connecting apparatus according to ~~any of claims 8-16~~ claim 9,

wherein said caulking device is operated by operation of an operating lever,

said component-holding-tape connecting apparatus further comprising a second guide portion that is to guide ~~a portion of~~ the holding member ~~from which the plurality of metallic connecting members have been separated, from a vicinity of said rotary body toward a position distant from said rotary body~~ away from said predetermined position in which each of the connecting members is to be cut off from the holding member,

wherein said second guide portion constitutes a second operating lever which cooperates with said operating lever as a first operating lever to operate said caulking device.

18. (Currently Amended) A strip body providing a plurality of ~~metallic~~ connecting members which are equally spaced apart from each other and which are held by a holding member having an elongated shape, each of said connecting members having a main body portion and a plurality of caulking claws provided to project from said main body portion, each of said connecting members serving to connect ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions of respective two component holding tapes therethrough, with said each of said ~~metallic~~ connecting members being held in close contact with the ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions, and with at least one of said plurality of caulking claws being caused to pierce through each of the ~~trailing and leading~~ end portions and to be ~~caulked~~ deformed.